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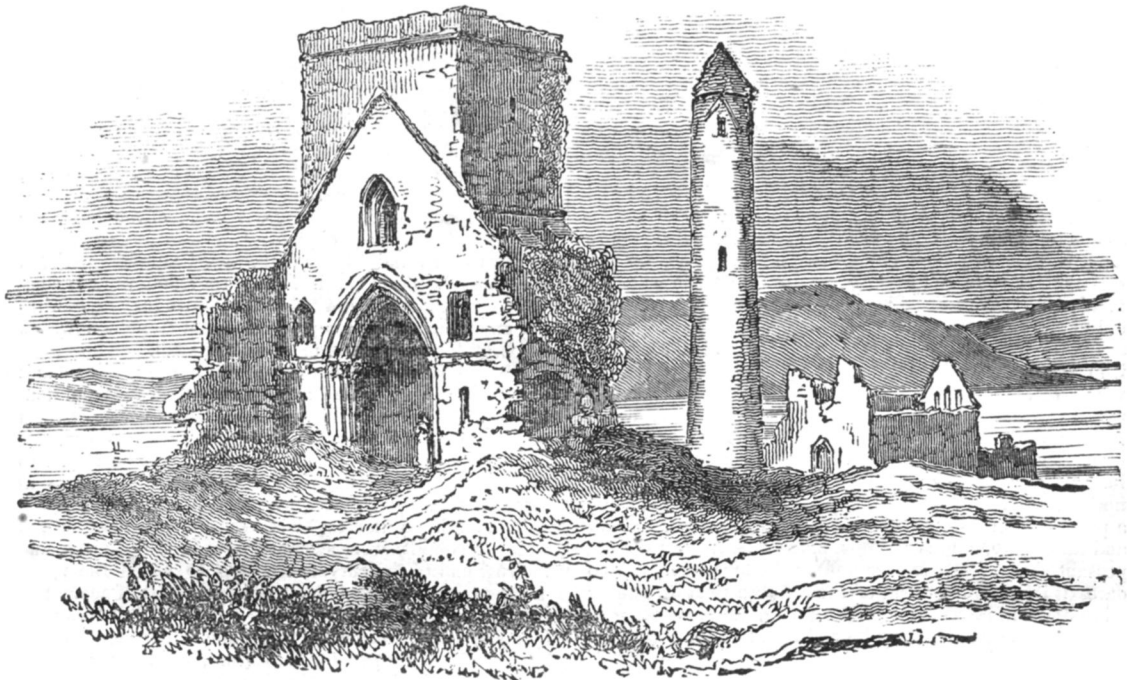
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THE  
**DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL,**  
PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

No. 85. Vol. I.

J. S. FOLDS, 5, BACHELOR'S WALK.

FEBRUARY 23, 1833.



*Ruins on Devenish Island, Lough Erne.*

### ISLAND OF DEVENISH.

IRELAND has had to complain of many things; but of none so much, perhaps, as that Irishmen are so much wanting to themselves and to their country. Their fatherland presents much to interest the inquiring traveller in its varied surface and its "many-coloured life," in the strongly contrasted lights and shades of its society, and in its cities and cultivated plains, which present beauties of art and nature, that may vie with those of any other country.

The woods and lawns and island-studded lakes present many a charm; but, alas! they remain almost unknown, "carent quia vate sacro!" England has the philosophic annalist of her smiling plains and ancient towns: she has the poets of her lawns and rivers. Scotland can exult in her gifted sons, who have made her romantic land known to fame: she may especially, while she laments, exult also in her admirable novelist and poet, who has celebrated and made accessible her picturesque mountains, her beautiful and storied lakes. But a few years since, and the most striking beauties of Scottish scenery were known only to the secluded highlander and wild mountaineer, or to the venturesome traveller, who feared not danger, and disregarded toil.

At length the Northern Minstrel attuned his lyre to sing these beauties, or interweave them with the winning tale, and straightway not only the reader, who could feel the power of his compositions, and could enjoy truly the scenes he drew so well, hastened by sea and land to see, but even the tasteless learned to affect an admiration of the beauties spread before them, and the country, till then in a great part accessible only to the pedestrian, was thrown open to the luxurious lounge in the fashionable barouche.\*

Sir W. Scott may justly have felt pleasure in having produced this effect by his writings; and Scotland may well take pride in her Wizard Minstrel. But who has done—who will do so much for Ireland? Our poets early

leave their native land, and with it seem to leave behind them all feeling for, or remembrance of it. He, of whom we boast especially as our poet, has ranged the wide and varied climes and kingdoms of the Eastern world in search of subjects for his muse. He has wandered through Egyptian land, and threaded the windings of its wondrous buildings: he has winged his flight heaven-ward, and caught the view of Peris and Angels, and sung their fortunes. But while thus ranging sea and land and earth and heaven, he overlooked the glories,—or if he will,—the sorrows of his country—he seemed to shew the honours, that irradiated the ancient name of Ireland, and, if we may judge from this neglect, we may conclude, he would gladly forget it. He has indeed written a few songs, but they are such, as a very few excepted, that they had better have remained unsung: nor are songs the kind of verse, from which a man would seek fame to himself, or honour to his country. And yet Ireland can shew him many interesting traditions, as subjects for a poem, and her lakes and hills many attractive scenes to transfer to his verses, and become their ornament.

The island, which furnishes the subject of the drawing, prefixed to this essay, presents, as the drawing shews, some attractive objects for the antiquary, and is itself part of a beautiful portion of Lough Erne scenery. For many years past, our Irish tourists have gone in crowds to visit the lakes of Cumberland, and a Cumberland gentleman familiar with those lakes from his infancy, declared on seeing Lough Erne, that he considered it equal in beauty to any of his own.

The island of Devenish in this lake is not in itself very remarkable for picturesque beauty. Its soil is so very fertile, that it has been asserted, that no manure had been applied to it for many years preceding. A popular writer of the present day, who has published very interesting sketches of India and lively "reminiscences of the Peninsula" (he is *not* an Irishman) has introduced this island into "a Story of a life." Perhaps he will see this publica-

\* And now to issue from the glen,

No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,

Until the present road was made through the romantic pass which I have presumptuously attempted to describe in the preceding stanzas, there was no way of issuing out of the defile, called the Trossachs, excepting by a sort of ladder composed of the branches and roots of the trees.—*Lady of the Lake*, p. 297.

Unless he climb with footing nice,

A far projecting precipice.—*St. XIV. p. 17.*

tion of yours, and when he finds notice taken of this "Story," and a statement in it respecting this island denied, it is hoped, he will not be offended. When an Irishman takes up *metaphorical* cudgels, and his adversary is at a safe distance, it is expected, no uneasiness will arise.

This writer in his wild and interesting Story, in the character of a lady writes thus—"There is a large and beautiful lake in my dear native land, called Lough Erne. Islands innumerable stud its silvery bosom." "One only spot in the whole scene had any aspect of gravity and sadness." "This small island, called Devenish, lay not very distant from that part of the main shore, on which stood our pretty mansion. It had a deader, duller and paler look than any of the other islets on the lake. The herbage was thinner and coarser, and more sand was mingled with the soil."

Now to this description, those who know the island and its real character, will immediately demur. The soil is, as has been already said, remarkably fertile, and therefore far from deserving such a description. It is true, the description is supposed to be given by a female with her mind much prepossessed by the gloomy tales of a croning old nurse.

But the writer had actually seen the island, had surveyed it in its length and breadth, (which, by the bye, are not very great) had noted its\* ruined priory,—"the very tall round tower, which reared its grey columnar form, like a monumental pillar." He has pointed out too as worthy of observation "the curious old relic among the weeds, a long narrow coffin of stone long without a tenant." He notices the virtues traditionally ascribed to this relic "as a prophetic touch-stone whereby we may learn our present and future fate, and is for this much boasted by the old peasant-chroniclers: and guided by the legend, they, who dare, it is said, may read of their future weal or woe by lying down in it, as it fits or otherwise, and according to the postures, in which they lie and turn in it, so read they of their doom."

It is plain, that the writer has seen and examined the island. We may allow a young lady, who perhaps is *not much of a farmer*, to underrate or misjudge a piece of ground, especially if she happen to have been reared by an old croning nurse, and if—to crown all—she be in love—and that unhappy love. But the writer was not obliged to describe the island so. He could have disposed his materials as he pleased. He could, if he chose, have made the lady a very good farmer, and particularly skilled in the mysteries of the dairy, and then she could consistently have noticed and admired the richness of the soil, notwithstanding the profundity of her love and sorrow.

Perhaps another edition will profit by this hint, and the mistake will be corrected.—Verb: sap.

It is however a venial fault: it is found in a work of fancy, in which the writer may have considered himself privileged to follow the leadings of his own lively imagination. But can we so gently dismiss from our reproof the sober antiquary, the man of line and rule, of notebook and pencil, whose boast it is, that "What Time forgets, he's sure to learn?"

An improved edition—and notwithstanding some faults an improved edition it was—of Guthrie's geography was published in Dublin about 1780. The enlargements were made chiefly in what concerned Ireland. Now here is his addition respecting this island.

"Near a mile† below Enniskillen lies the Island of Devenish: it contains near 200 acres of the richest land in the country, and is remarkable for possessing one of the completest round towers in Ireland. This round tower is built of black stone cut into blocks, which seemed united independent of cement. There is also on this island the ruin of an ancient church, an object generally found to accompany these towers." There are the ruins of three churches—and this, by-the-bye—whether the towers are the accompaniment to the churches, or the churches to the towers, is a question not yet decided. General opinion seems to bear to the opinion, that the towers are the appendage. However that may be, if the writer meant the ruin, the drawing of which accompanies this, the observation was incorrect. The tower was built—

\* They are represented in the drawing.

† It is more nearly two miles.

we know not when, except that it must have been in a time far remote: and the priory was erected in a time comparatively modern, viz. A.D. 1449. This date appears with other circumstances cut in relief on a stone, which is built into the wall of the priory-tower presented in the view. The other mistakes in the quoted passage may be best corrected by a plain statement of the actual dimension of the island, and by a brief detail of what concerns the tower.

The island contains between 70 and 80 Irish acres. Viewed from the water in some points it presents an oval outline in the gently swelling and sloping ground, of that description, which so frequently meets and pleases the traveller's eye in the county Down, and which gave rise to the well-known homely, yet apt comparison of the hills in that county to eggs laid lengthways in a bowl of salt. This is the only beauty the island possesses; and either from neglect, or from the great value of the land, the island is utterly naked of planting.

The tower is indeed one of the most beautiful—perhaps, the most beautiful in Ireland. Its stone work is complete even to its top-stone—and that—we may say—without any thanks to the proprietor. That stone is now, and has been for some years toppling to its fall.

Some seeds of the elder have been borne to the summit of the tower by the wind; there they took root and flourished. The effect on the stones has been to displace them very much, and, if some steps be not taken to preserve this interesting structure, it will in a few years be added to the numerous ruins, that in this country surrounds us as memorials of our recklessness and insipidity.

The outline of the tower is beautiful. The stones, of which it is built, were accurately cut in the external and internal end to the curve, according to which the tower is constructed. The summit, or cap, is built of accurately cut stones laid on in diminishing series, till it is crowned by a single stone fashioned to a cone. The stones of the structure are cemented with mortar; but the quantity of cement laid in it so small, that an accurate and close inspection is necessary to discern it. The stones are *not black*. The author of "A Story" well and briefly depicts the effects of the weather on their outer surface, when he speaks of "the grey columnar form" of the tower. The stones are a light brown sand-stone found in that neighbourhood, and most excellently adapted for building; as it can be cut to any scantling, and it hardens with the weather.

The cornice is divided into four parts, and the points of division marked by four carved heads, which look to the cardinal points. Each division is neatly wrought with a carving peculiar to itself. There are several windows, or openings in the tower, four close under the cornice and their places marked by the carved heads; and others at different distances below them. Within about seven feet from the ground there is an opening evidently intended for a door-way: it is about four feet high, and has on the inner jamb on the left-hand side an iron hinge strongly fastened into the stone. At a small distance above there is a fractured spot indicating the place, where the corresponding hinge had been.

A few years since an attempt was made to ascertain the height of the tower. From observation the height is supposed to be about 90 feet: the circumference at the base is 48 feet.

The ruins of the Priory were even a few years back much more extensive, than they are at present. But Turks are not the only people, who pull down and destroy the interesting remains of the olden time. The lads of the neighbouring town, if report speak truth, have shown much activity in clearing away walls and fallen masses, that in their judgment perhaps encumbered the ground. Old Time has been to them a mere child in the work of devastation. The "*Quod non fecerunt Goti, Id fecerunt Scoti*,"\*

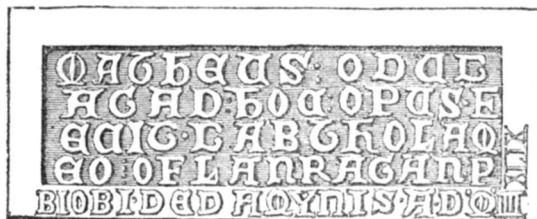
so invidiously and unjustly applied to a nobleman whose aim was, to *preserve and not destroy*, may with a little alteration be adapted to our free and easy gentry,

\* Let us try to translate the above couplet in the way of adaptation:—

What that Goth, old Time was unable to do  
The E—rs did—and speedily too.

A barbarous rhyme will suit a barbarous act.

who pull down and carry off the interesting remains of art left by our ancestors, and that to *destroy* and *not preserve*.



MATHEUS O. DUBAGAN  
HOC OPUS FECIT:  
BARTHOLAMEO O. FLANNAGAN  
PRIORI DE DAMYNIS, A.D.  
1449.

But the En——rs have not had this boast entirely to themselves.

"In the year 1808,

"I cannot tell how the truth may be,  
I say the tale, as 'twas said to me."

"A captain of artillery resided in the ordnance barrack in the town of E——. His wife, an Italian lady, resided with him. The captain, wishing to erect a certain necessary little edifice in his garden, hired a cot, which was sent to Devenish to fetch thence some of the stones, which the piety and munificence of our ancestors had raised for religious purposes, and were now destined for a purpose *not quite so dignified and venerable*. The cot was accordingly well laden from the ruins, and among the stones then carried away was that, which bears the inscription given above. The building was in due time finished, and the stone with the inscription built into the wall over the door—with the hope, perhaps, on the part of the captain, that in future ages some searching antiquary might be led to venerate the memory of a man who had the taste to mark the erecting of such an important building and fix the period by connecting it with the time, when B. O'Flannagan bore sway in the neighbouring Priory!! The stone however was not to fulfil so important a duty. The cot in the trip, in which it brought away the stone, was in imminent danger of being swamped. The Captain's lady heard of this, and also, that the stone had been part and parcel of the old priory. Both circumstances wrought so powerfully on her mind, that she never ceased to importune the Captain, until she prevailed on him to take down the stone and sent it back to the priory. The stone is now firmly built into the wall of the priory-tower."

The date marked on the stone, A.D. 1449. connected with a passage in a letter from Sir John Davis\* to the Earl of Salisbury, affords ground for supposing, that the priory did not very long enjoy the prosperity, which seemed to be secured to it by its insulated position. Sir John had attended the Lord Deputy of Ireland on a tour of inspection through the counties of Monaghan, Fermanagh, and Cavan, the substance of which is detailed to the Earl in the letter, from which this extract is taken.

After detailing the result of the inquiries in the county Monaghan, he proceeds to write—"From Monaghan we went the first night to the ruins of the Abbey of Clonays, (Clones) where we camped; passing from thence through ways almost impassable for our carriages by reason of woods and bogs, we came the second night after to the south side of Lough Erne, and pitched our tents over against the Island of Devenish, a place being prepared for the holding of our sessions for Fermanagh in the ruins of an abbey there."

There are other ruins in the island, and some interesting notices connected with them, particularly with that named "St. Molaise's Kitchen," which is now the ruin of a ruin. But of these another time. \* \* \*

\* This letter was most probably written in the beginning of the reign of James I. some time between the year 1606 and 1612. In the latter year Sir John died suddenly, as was thought, of apoplexy.

### FALLS OF NIAGARA.

WE have long had it in contemplation to furnish to our readers a description of those remarkable Falls, and as a friend has supplied us with the subjoined sketch of the hotels that stand close to them, we proceed to carry our intentions into effect. We should, perhaps, account for thus deviating from

our general rule of confining ourselves to matters relating solely to Ireland, and we do so by stating, that we insert this article as an introduction to some on the interesting subject of Emigration, which we hope shortly to lay before our readers. At the present period, also, when so many of our countrymen are about to seek for homes "beyond the Western main," we trust that the following description will not be considered as entirely misplaced. Admitting our apology to be quite satisfactory, it may be asked, whether a view of the Falls themselves, would not be a more appropriate introduction to such an article as the present? Our answer is, that such a view as our space would enable us to present, would do but little towards conveying an idea of a scene of such magnitude; and we think that the scale section and map which we subjoin, together with the description, will do more towards enabling our readers to form some conception of those stupendous Falls, than any view which it would be in our power to give. Generally speaking, a very inferior delineation of natural scenery, will convey a better idea of the character and appearance of the place depicted, than the most elaborate description, and the pencil of a tyro in his art, may be more effective than the pen of a Scott. There are scenes, however, which baffle alike the pencil and the pen: one of these is, the subject of this article; but as its peculiarities consist, in a great degree, in its immense magnitude and the tremendous sound which issues from it, and sight is thus not the only sense affected: the pen may be more successful than the pencil—"The thunder and rush of mighty waters" may be described, but they cannot be delineated.

The river Niagara conveys the waters of Lake Erie into Lake Ontario, the last of that chain of lakes or inland seas of fresh water, which extend through a great part of Northern America, and contribute much to its wealth, by the facilities which they afford for commercial intercourse. These lakes are connected by rivers, and are supposed to contain nearly one-half of the fresh water on the surface of the habitable globe, which passing from one to the other, is ultimately discharged into the Atlantic Ocean, through the broad bed of the mighty St. Lawrence. The majority of those lakes, both in size and number, lie to the north and north-west of Lake Erie; their waters pass into it, and from it by the river Niagara, into Lake Ontario, forming, in their course, the celebrated Falls. Lake Erie is about two hundred and sixty miles in length, about sixty-three in breadth at its widest part, and is about six hundred and fifty miles in circumference. Its greatest depth varies from forty to forty-five fathoms, its average depth is about twelve. The level of Lake Erie, at the efflux of the Niagara, is about three hundred and thirty-four feet above the level of the Ontario, at the place where this river enters the latter lake. At Fort Erie, which is situated at the north-eastern extremity of the lake of that name, the river Niagara may be said to commence, and is there about a mile in width. At some distance farther down it becomes contracted to half that breadth, and consequently rapid; but escaping from this restraint, it expands in a gentle flow to an extent of over six miles, embracing, in its progress, several islands, one of which, called Grand Island, containing a superficies of more than eleven thousand acres, is partially settled. The Niagara flows through a flat, fertile, and rapidly improving country, between banks so little above the level of its surface, as to lead Captain Hall to conjecture that a perpendicular rise in its waters, to an extent not exceeding eight or nine feet, would lay the adjoining districts on both sides under water to a considerable extent. This, as will hereafter be seen could occur only between Fort Erie and the Welland river. Along its course it separates Canada from the States, to which latter country all the islands which it contains, with the exception of Navy Island, belong. From Fort Erie to the mouth of the Welland (6\*) is about sixteen miles; from thence to the falls about four. Immediately below the junction of the Welland the indraught of the cataract becomes perceptible in the ripple which it causes (7). The water shortly after (8) rushes on with amazing force and rapidity in foaming and roaring rapids, until it changes its course, at rather a sharp angle a little above Goat Island (1), where it seems to pause, for a moment, in comparative tranquillity (9); quickly, however, sweeping along with accelerated speed and irresistible impetuosity (10), divided by the island into two unequal channels, it rushes down the inclined plane at the head of the falls, until the whole mighty mass of waters is suddenly projected over the edge of a rock, one hundred and

\* See subjoined Map, p. 277.